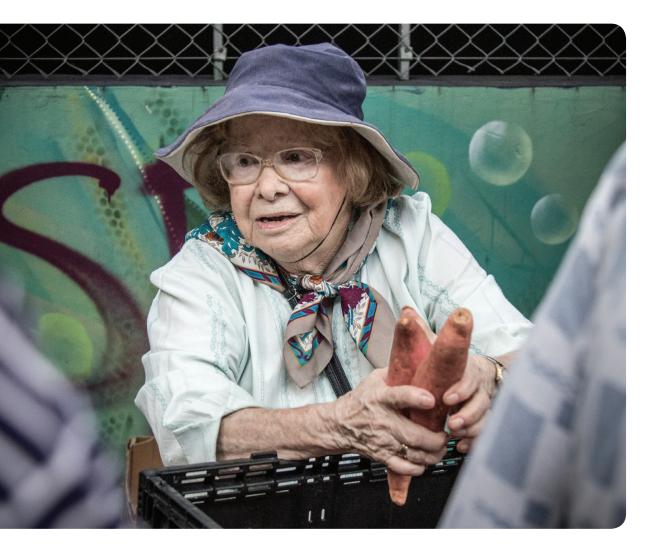


# FOODBANK MUNGER REPORT 2019



mccrindle



# CONTENTS

- **4 ABOUT THIS REPORT**
- 6 ABOUT FOODBANK
- 8 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- 10 A SNAPSHOT OF FOOD INSECURITY IN AUSTRALIA
- 12 THE REALITY OF FOOD INSECURITY IN AUSTRALIA
- 14 WOMEN BEAR THE BRUNT OF FOOD INSECURITY
- 16 WHAT CAUSES FOOD INSECURITY?
- **18 THE INFLUENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY ON MENTAL HEALTH**
- 20 IMPACTS OF FOOD RELIEF
- 22 FOODBANK ACROSS AUSTRALIA
- 24 METHODOLOGY
- 26 CONTACTS

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

# THE FOODBANK HUNGER REPORT PROVIDES AN ANNUAL SNAPSHOT OF FOOD INSECURITY IN AUSTRALIA

According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation food insecurity is defined as individuals or households having limited or uncertain physical, social or economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and culturally relevant food.

This report combines insights from two surveys, bringing together the perspectives of charities and community groups providing front-line food relief as well as individuals experiencing food insecurity.

The Foodbank Charity Partner Survey was completed by charities across Australia that source food from the food rescue sector, including Foodbank, OzHarvest and SecondBite. The survey gathered information about each organisation's food relief activities and beneficiaries. Now in its seventh year, this survey gathered 2,089 responses between December 2018 and May 2019.

The second survey gathered responses from Australians who have experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months. This is the fourth time Foodbank has conducted research amongst those directly affected by food insecurity. The survey explored the prevalence of food insecurity in Australia, as well as the experiences of those living with food insecurity. This survey was conducted in four stages between 1 July and 22 July 2019 and gathered responses from a sample of 1,017 food insecure Australians.

Charity Partner Survey written and hosted by Foodbank. Survey of Australians experiencing food insecurity written and hosted by McCrindle. Data collation, storytelling and visualisation by McCrindle.



# ABOUT FOODBARK

FOODBANK IS THE LARGEST PROVIDER OF VITAL FOOD AND GROCERIES TO FOOD RELIEF CHARITIES AROUND AUSTRALIA. LAST YEAR ALONE IT COLLECTED SUFFICIENT SUPPLIES TO PROVIDE 210,000 MEALS TO PEOPLE IN NEED EVERY DAY

Foodbank distributes food and groceries to over 2,400 charities nationally, the majority of whom (70%) rank Foodbank as the most important source of supplies for their organisations. Foodbank also supplies food for over 2,000 school breakfast programs nationally.

Foodbank works with the entire Australian food and grocery sector including farmers, wholesalers, manufacturers and retailers to address the pressing issue of food waste by redirecting product from landfill. Donations include stock that's out of specification, close to expiry or excess to requirements as well as proactive donations of in-demand items. In addition, Foodbank collaborates with suppliers, manufacturers and transporters in a world-leading program to source key staple items that don't come in sufficient quantities via rescue channels. These include fresh produce, cereal, milk, rice, pasta, sausages and canned foods. This ensures the reliable availability of foods that provide variety, convenience, nutritional value and cultural appropriateness. In particular, it secures foods for families, people with special health and dietary needs and school children via the school breakfast programs.

Foodbank also works closely with corporate Australia to secure much needed funds and expertise to support its food relief efforts.



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Foodbank is committed to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals as an approach to reduce poverty, promote sustainable development and ensure the peace and prosperity of all people. The Goals reflect values that Australians seek to protect, like a clean and safe environment, access to opportunity and services, human rights, strong and accessible institutions, inclusive economies, diverse and supportive communities and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage.

Foodbank's activities play a direct role in delivering a number of the Goals in Australia. In particular, Foodbank is key to achieving Goal 2: Zero Hunger which aims to end food insecurity. Everyone in Australia should have enough safe and nutritious food to thrive. A country with zero hunger can positively impact the economy, health, education, equality and social development. Achieving zero hunger is fundamental to building a better future for everyone.

Foodbank also has a major role in Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. In particular, Foodbank is pivotal to 12.3, halving food waste by 2030. Around a third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted from the farm to the fork. This huge level of inefficiency has economic, social, and environmental impacts which can be reduced for the benefit of all.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# DESPITE AUSTRALIA'S REPUTATION AS A WEALTHY COUNTRY, FOOD INSECURITY IS A REALITY FOR AN INCREASING NUMBER OF PEOPLE

In the last year, more than one in five Australians (21%) have been in a situation where they have run out of food and have been unable to buy more. That is the equivalent of five million people. At least once a week, around half of these people skip a meal (55%) or cut down on the size of their meals to make their food go further (50%). At least once a week, three in ten food insecure Australians (30%) go a whole day without eating.

Every month, the charities that work with Foodbank provide relief to over 815,000 Australians experiencing food insecurity. Despite this huge effort, charities are struggling to keep up with demand. Over the past 12 months, the number of people seeking food relief has increased by 22%. Less than two in five charities (37%) believe they are currently meeting the full needs of the people they assist.

#### WOMEN BEAR THE BRUNT OF FOOD INSECURITY

Women are at greater risk of food insecurity, and also feel the impacts more strongly than men. More than one in four women in Australia (27%) have experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months. This compares to 18% of men. The experience of food insecurity can look quite different for women and men. The female experience is often characterised by higher levels of emotional strain, with women more likely to say they feel anxious (49% compared to 37% males) and stressed (58% compared to 47% males) as a result of food insecurity. Mothers experiencing food insecurity are twice as likely as fathers to feel like a bad parent when there is not enough food in the house (50% of mothers strongly agree compared to 26% of fathers).

The events that make women vulnerable to food insecurity can also look different. Women experiencing food insecurity are more likely than men to have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime (53% compared to 32%). They are also more likely to have raised children on their own for an extended period (49% compared to 28% males).

#### AUSTRALIANS WITH A HISTORY OF PERSONAL HARDSHIP ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO FOOD INSECURITY

Unexpected bills or housing payments are often the immediate reason an individual goes hungry. Almost half of Australians who have experienced food insecurity in the last year (49%) have gone hungry because of an unexpected bill or expense. Two in five (42%) have experienced food insecurity because they are living on a low income or pension, while one in three (34%) have gone without food so they can pay their rent or mortgage repayments.

However, there may also be more complex factors at work in a person's life which lead to food insecurity. For example, seven in ten Australians experiencing food insecurity (70%) have been unable to find a job for an extended period at some point in their lives. Two in five (42%) have experienced domestic violence, while 38% have raised children on their own for an extended time. Experiencing hardship can make an individual vulnerable to food insecurity in the short-term, but can also have lasting emotional, financial and physical effects which make it difficult to get back on track.

## FOOD INSECURITY CAN CAUSE A SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN MENTAL HEALTH

Being unable to afford enough food takes a significant toll on a person's physical health, with almost half of Australians struggling with food insecurity (47%) feeling tired or lethargic as a result of not having enough food. But food insecurity can also have a devastating effect on an individual's mental health.

Australians struggling with food insecurity are much more likely to experience high or very high levels of psychological distress than the average Australian. Seven in ten (70%) food insecure Australians experience high or very high levels of psychological distress compared to only 13% of the general population.<sup>1</sup>

Almost three in five Australians experiencing food insecurity (58%) have sought assistance from a charity at least once in the last 12 months. While the main benefit of receiving food relief is feeling less hungry (44%), many Australians experiencing food insecurity have also noticed improvements in their mental wellbeing. One in three (33%) say their mental health has improved as a result of receiving assistance, while one in four (25%) say they are able to focus and concentrate better.



# A SNAPSHOT OF FOOD INSECURITY INAUSTRALIA

>>>

MORE THAN 1 IN 5 Australians (21%) have experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months



At least once a week, **3 IN 10** food insecure Australians (30%) go a whole day without eating



**CHILDREN REPRESENT 22%** of food insecure Australians<sup>1</sup>

## WOMEN BEAR THE BRUNT OF FOOD INSECURITY

Women are **1.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY** than men to experience food insecurity.



## FOOD INSECURE AUSTRALIANS ARE FIVE TIMES AS LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS THAN THE AVERAGE AUSTRALIAN

One in eight Australians (13%) experience high or very high levels of psychological distress<sup>2</sup>





## **FOOD RELIEF IN AUSTRALIA**

FOODBANK PROVIDES RELIEF TO OVER

AUSTRALIANS EVERY MONTH\*

AGE BREAKDOWN OF AUSTRALIANS RECEIVING FOOD RELIEF

•	4%	7%	<b>7</b> %	25%	43%	14%	
	0-4	5-14	15-19	20-39	40-64	65+	

## CHARITIES ARE STRUGGLING TO MEET THE RISING NEED FOR FOOD RELIEF



# **22%** increase in the number

of individuals seeking food relief from charities in the last 12 months



#### 37%

proportion of charities meeting the full needs of the people they assist

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018, 4364.0.55.001 National Health Survey: First Results, 2017-18
\* Not including School Breakfast Programs

# THE REALITY OF FOOD INSECURITY INAUSTRALIA



# ONE IN FIVE AUSTRALIANS (21%) HAVE EXPERIENCED FOOD INSECURITY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS\*

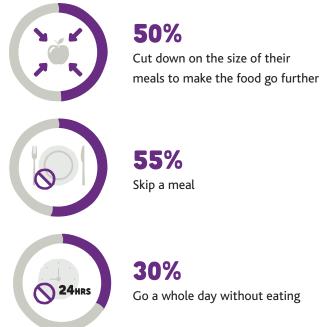


These Australians may be dealing with a range of circumstances, from anxiety about accessing enough food to going without food altogether.

At least once a week, around half of Australians experiencing food insecurity skip a meal (55%) or cut down on the size of their meals to make their food go further (50%). Three in ten (30%) go a whole day without eating at least once a week.

One in five parents experiencing food insecurity (20%) say their children go a whole day without eating meat or fresh fruit or vegetables at least once a week. Almost as many (18%) say their children go a whole day without eating at all at least once a week.

#### AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK, **FOOD INSECURE AUSTRALIANS:**



Go a whole day without eating

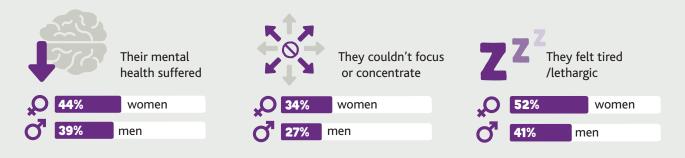
# WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO

# WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE FOOD INSECURITY THAN MEN

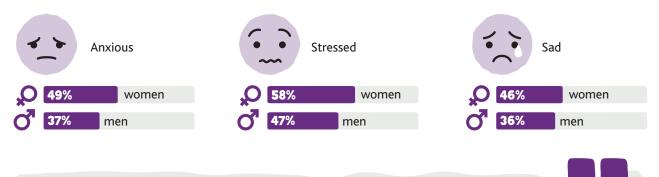
More than one in four Australian women (27%) have experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months. This compares to 18% of men\*.

The experience of food insecurity can look quite different for women and men. The female experience is often characterised by higher levels of anxiety and stress and women may feel the physical effects more in their energy levels and concentration. Mothers experiencing food insecurity are twice as likely as fathers to feel like a bad parent when there is not enough food in the house (50% of mothers strongly agree compared to 26% of fathers).

#### WHEN THEY ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS ENOUGH FOOD, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MEN TO SAY:



#### WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO REPORT EXPERIENCING NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AS A RESULT OF FOOD INSECURITY:



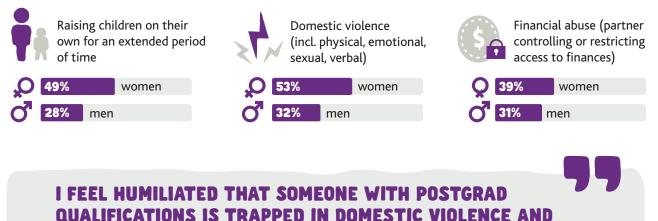
I HATE THAT I CAN'T COOK PROPER MEALS AND SIT AND EAT WITH MY CHILD. SHE ALWAYS ASKS WHY I'M NOT EATING WITH HER, BUT WE DON'T ALWAYS HAVE ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF US TO EAT. I'D RATHER MISS OUT, SO SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO.

- Gen Y single mother, VIC

#### MORE THAN HALF OF FOOD INSECURE WOMEN HAVE EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SINGLE PARENTING

The events that make women vulnerable to food insecurity can also look different. Women experiencing food insecurity are more likely than men to have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime (53% compared to 32%). They are also more likely to have raised children on their own for an extended period of time at some point (49% compared to 28% males). Men, on the other hand, are more likely to have been unable to find a job for an extended period of time (73% compared to 67%). Women experiencing food insecurity are likely to struggle with purchasing other necessities. For exmaple, half of women experiencing food insecurity (50%) have been unable to afford feminine hygiene products at some point in their lives.

#### IN THEIR LIFETIME, WOMEN STRUGGLING WITH FOOD INSECURITY ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE EXPERIENCED:



CAN'T GET A JOB FOR MORE THAN 8 HOURS PER WEEK.

– Gen X woman, Brisbane

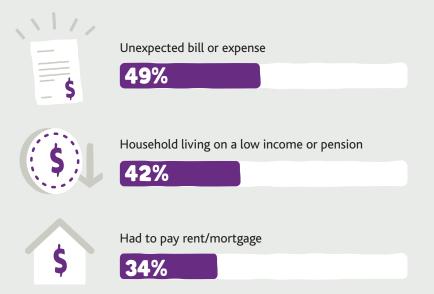
# WHAT CAUSES FOOD INSECURITY?

## **IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF FOOD INSECURITY**

The cost of living is a key cause of food insecurity in Australia, especially for those living on a low income.

Almost half of Australians who have experienced food insecurity in the last year (49%) have gone hungry due to an unexpected bill or expense. Two in five (42%) have experienced food insecurity because they are living on a low income or pension, while one in three (34%) have gone without food so they can pay their rent or mortgage.

#### TOP THREE IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF FOOD INSECURITY:



AFTER I PAY RENT AND ELECTRICITY, I'M LEFT WITH HARDLY ANY MONEY TO BUY FOOD. I'VE GONE DAYS WITH NO FOOD JUST SO MY SON CAN EAT.

- Gen Y single mother, Perth

## AUSTRALIANS WITH A HISTORY OF PERSONAL HARDSHIP ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO FOOD INSECURITY

Unexpected bills or housing payments are often the immediate reason a person will go hungry. But there may also be more complex factors that make someone more vulnerable to food insecurity. For example, seven in ten Australians experiencing food insecurity (70%) have faced being unable to find a job for an extended period at some point in their lives.

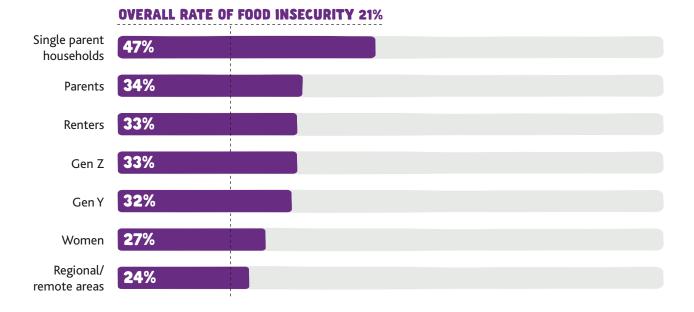
#### IN THEIR LIVES, AUSTRALIANS EXPERIENCING FOOD INSECURITY HAVE:



### **38%** Raised children on their own for an extended period of time

**35%** Experienced financial abuse (partner controlling or restricting access to finances)

#### WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE FOOD INSECURITY?



# THE INFLUENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY ON MENTAL HEALTH

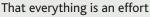
Being unable to afford enough food takes a significant toll on an individual's mental and physical health. Many Australians struggling with food insecurity feel tired or lethargic (47%) as a direct result of not having enough food. Around two in five (41%) say their mental health has suffered or they have lost their confidence (37%). Food insecure Australians are five times as likely to experience psychological distress than the average Australian. Just over one in ten adults (13%) in Australia experience high or very high levels of psychological distress<sup>3</sup> compared to 70% of food insecure Australians.

#### ALL OR MOST OF THE TIME, MORE THAN ONE IN THREE AUSTRALIANS STRUGGLING WITH FOOD INSECURITY FEEL:



Tired out for no good reason





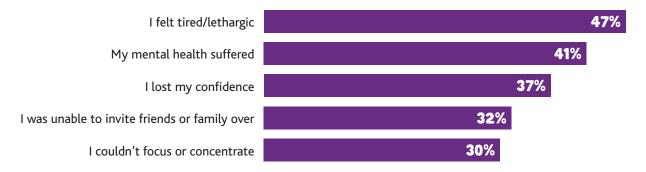


IT TOOK AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF COURAGE TO ADMIT THAT WE NEEDED HELP. I FELT A LOT OF SHAME THAT I COULDN'T FEED MY CHILDREN. I WAS WORRIED I MIGHT GET TURNED AWAY, THINKING THAT I WASN'T WORSE OFF ENOUGH TO GET HELP.

– Gen X mother, Sydney



#### WHICH OF THESE, IF ANY, HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED AS A RESULT OF NOT HAVING ENOUGH FOOD FOR YOURSELF OR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS?



#### AUSTRALIANS STRUGGLING WITH FOOD INSECURITY ARE LESS LIKELY TO FEEL THEY CAN TALK TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN TIMES OF NEED

Three quarters of Australians (76%) feel they can talk to friends and family about what they are going through in times of need. This compares to 68% of Australians struggling with food insecurity. Food insecure Australians are even less likely to feel they can talk to their friends and family in situations when they run out of food and are unable to purchase more (47%).

# IMPACTS OF FOOD RELIEF



I WENT THERE WHEN I WAS EXTREMELY DESPERATE. I WAS EMBARRASSED AND FELT WORTHLESS. THE CHARITY I WENT TO WAS SO FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL AND ALLEVIATED A LOT OF ANXIETY AND EMBARRASSMENT FOR ME. – Gen X woman, Brisbane

#### FOOD RELIEF IMPROVES MENTAL HEALTH

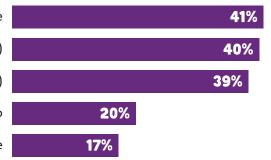
Every month, the charities that work with Foodbank provide relief to over 815,000 Australians experiencing food insecurity. While the main benefit of receiving food relief is feeling less hungry (44%), many Australians experiencing food insecurity have also noticed improvements in their mental state. One in three (33%) say their mental health improved as a result of receiving assistance, while one in four (25%) say they were able to better focus and concentrate. Four in five recipients of food relief (84%) say the benefits of food relief made a difference in their lives for a week or more.

#### **BARRIERS TO SEEKING ASSISTANCE**

Two in five Australians experiencing food insecurity (41%) have not sought assistance from a charity in the last 12 months. Australians experiencing food insecurity are put off seeking assistance because they think there might be people who need assistance more than they do (41%). Embarrassment (40%) and shame (39%) are also common barriers.

#### **TOP FIVE BARRIERS TO SEEKING FOOD ASSISTANCE**

There might be people who need assistance more than me Embarrassment (afraid of what people around me will think) Shame (afraid of feeling inadequate and dependent on charity) It doesn't happen to me often enough to seek charity help I prefer to ask help from those who are close to me

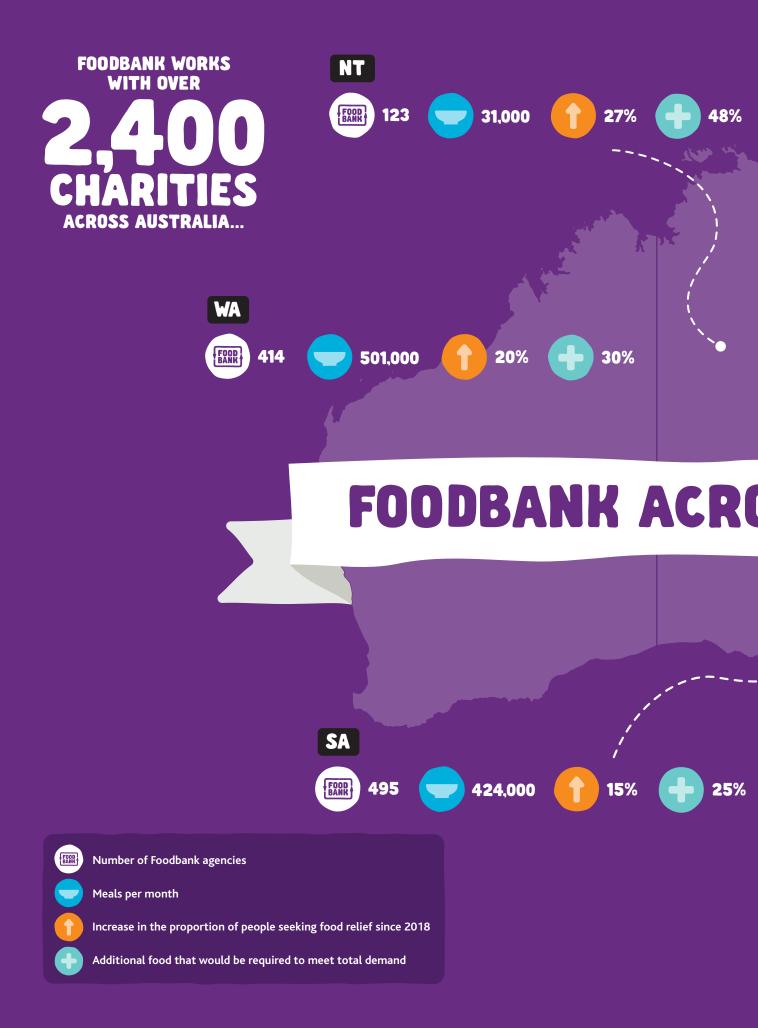


#### CHARITIES ARE STRUGGLING TO MEET THE RISING NEED FOR FOOD RELIEF

Despite the barriers to seeking assistance, three in five Australians experiencing food insecurity (59%) have sought assistance from a charity at least once in the last 12 months. Three in ten (29%) seek assistance at least once a month.

The number of Australians seeking food relief has increased by 22% over the last 12 months. With their current resources, less than two in five charities (37%) feel they are meeting the full needs of the people they assist. A CERTAIN LOCAL CHARITY DELIVERED A WHOLE HEAP OF FOOD WHICH LASTED A COUPLE OF WEEKS IN WHICH WE WERE ABLE TO GET ON TOP OF A BILL THAT HAD BEEN HARASSING US. IT MAKES YOU FEEL SO MUCH HAPPIER AND CALMER KNOWING THERE WASN'T GOING TO BE A KNOCK ON THE DOOR THIS WEEK.

- Gen Y mother, regional QLD





## **METHODOLOGY**

#### FOODBANK CHARITY PARTNER SURVEY

The Foodbank Charity Partner Survey was completed by charities across Australia that source food from the food rescue sector, including Foodbank, OzHarvest and SecondBite. Respondents were asked to answer questions based on their current operating performance, clientele and needs. The survey received 1,717 responses from Foodbank agencies, 233 from OzHarvest agencies and 139 from SecondBite agencies. Throughout this report, analysis has only been provided for the 1,712 responses from Foodbank agencies. Foodbank's 1,717 responses represent 71% of all registered agencies across Australia that have received food from Foodbank in the last 12 months.

Data collated in the survey was cleaned to ensure a robust analysis including filtering of results to only include organisations that provided food relief and verifying any outliers to ensure these responses did not inappropriately alter the overall results.

The total number of people receiving assistance from Foodbank's agencies was calculated by finding the average number of people assisted by agencies for each state and multiplying this by the number of agencies in each state that had received food from Foodbank in the last 12 months. This is the same method used in the 2017 and 2018 reports but differs from the method used in earlier iterations. The same calculation was used to find the number of people unable to be assisted by Foodbank's agencies.

The section titled 'Foodbank across Australia' reports the total number of agencies registered with Foodbank (n=2,421). Calculations for the number of people assisted, however, are based on the number of agencies that received food from Foodbank in the last 12 months (n=2,402).

#### **GRAPHS AND ROUNDING**

Data labels on the graphs in this report have been rounded for simplicity. Some graphs may, therefore, sum to 99% or 101%. Any calculations where two data points have been added are based on raw data (not the rounded data labels on the graph) which have then been rounded once combined.

# SURVEY OF AUSTRALIANS EXPERIENCING FOOD INSECURITY

An online survey was conducted with Australians aged 18 years and older who had experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months. The survey was designed and deployed by McCrindle and was conducted in four stages:

Stage 1: A panel of 1,002 Australians (nationally representative by state, age and gender) were asked whether they had experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months. Data from this question was used to inform statistics about the prevalence of food insecurity in Australia. The sample of males has been adjusted to be representative of males in Australia by age group, bringing the total sample of males to 300. The margin of error on a sample of 300 is less than 6%, compared to a 5% margin on samples of 380 respondents or more.

To determine if respondents had experienced food insecurity, they were asked to answer yes or no to the following question: "In the last 12 months, was there any time when you or anyone in your household ran out of food and did not have enough money to purchase more?" 214 Australians were found to have experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months.

Stage 2: Following stage 1, the survey was re-launched to gather 380 responses each from New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, representative by age and gender. Data from this question was used to inform statistics about the prevalence of food insecurity in each state.

Stage 3: The survey was re-launched a third time to gather a larger sample of Australians experiencing food insecurity. A total of 1,017 Australians (including those from stages 1 and 2), were then asked about their experience of food insecurity.

Stage 4: The survey was re-launched a fourth time to gather additional responses from Australians experiencing food insecurity living in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. A total of at least 380 responses was gathered from each of these states in order to make robust comparisons between states.

#### THE KESSLER 10 QUESTION PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS SCALE (K10)

The survey of Australians experiencing food insecurity utilised the Kessler 10 question psychological distress scale (K10).

The K10 questionnaire was developed to yield a global measure of psychosocial distress.<sup>4</sup> The 10-item questionnaire yields a measure of psychological distress based on questions about people's level of nervousness, agitation, psychological fatigue and depression (with different degrees of severity) experienced in the four weeks prior to interview. For each question, there is a five-level response scale based on the amount of time that a respondent experienced those particular feelings. Each response option is assigned a value to denote severity. The response options are:

- None of the time (1)
- A little of the time (2)
- Some of the time (3)
- Most of the time (4)
- All of the time (5).

Response values were summed to achieve a minimum possible score of 10 and a maximum possible score of 50. Responses were then grouped in line with the categories used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>5</sup> (outlined below), making the results in this report comparable to ABS deployments of this tool.

- 0-15 low levels of psychological distress
- 16-21 moderate levels of psychological distress
- 22-29 high levels of psychological distress
- 30-50 very high levels of psychological distress



T +61 2 8824 3422 E info@mccrindle.com.au w mccrindle.com.au

## CONTACTS

#### FOODBANK AUSTRALIA

- 11 Julius Avenue, North Ryde NSW 2113
- T 02 9887 4144
- E admin@foodbank.org.au
- F @FoodbankAus

#### FOODBANK NSW & ACT

- 50 Owen Street, Glendenning NSW 2761
- T 02 9756 3099
- E office@foodbanknsw.org.au
- F @FoodbankNSWACT

#### FOODBANK NORTHERN TERRITORY

- 9 Mel Road, Berrimah NT 0828
- T 08 8947 3669
- E info@bcnt.org.au
- F @FoodbankNT

#### FOODBANK QUEENSLAND

- 179 Beverley Street, Morningside QLD 4170
- T 07 3395 8422
- E admin@foodbankqld.org.au
- F @FoodbankQLD

#### FOODBANK SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- 377a Cross Road, Edwardstown SA 5039 T 08 8351 1136 E office@foodbanksa.org.au
- F @Foodbank\_SA

#### FOODBANK TASMANIA

- 4-8 Sunmont Street, Derwent Park TAS 7009 T 03 6274 1052
- E tasmania@foodbanktas.org.au

#### **FOODBANK VICTORIA**

- 4/2 Somerville Road, Yarraville VIC 3013
- T 03 9362 8300
- E info@foodbankvictoria.org.au
- F @FoodbankVic

#### FOODBANK WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- 23 Abbott Road, Perth Airport WA 6105
- T 08 9258 9277
- E wa.info@foodbankwa.org.au
- F @FoodbankWA







FOODBANK.ORG.AU